



Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Milwaukee, WI

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

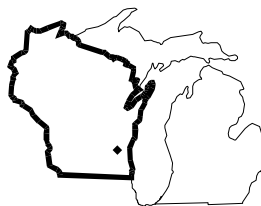
EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Since 1995, EPA has funded more than 150 Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the City of Milwaukee for a Brownfields Pilot. Milwaukee (population 628,000) is focusing its brownfields efforts on the Menomonee River Valley (population approximately 68,000). This 1,500-acre industrial area lies in the heart of the city and includes 300 to 400 acres of abandoned or underused properties. For years the area was home to many industrial facilities, including foundries, power plants, coke and coal gasification plants, tanneries, cement plants, and chemical companies. Today, about 7,000 people work in the valley, from a high in the 1930s of more than 50,000 workers. The residents surrounding the valley are 48% minority and suffer from a 13% unemployment rate, a 39% poverty rate, and a median household income that is half the state average.

The key to cleanup and redevelopment of Menomonee Valley is establishing innovative methods of dealing with groundwater contamination. Extensive marshes used to occupy the valley, and steep bluffs, some 40 feet higher than the modern land surface, bordered the marshes. From 1835 to 1890, the bluffs were cut and graded, and the material from the bluffs along with household and industrial wastes were used to fill in the marshy areas. Prospective investors, lenders, and developers are wary of the valley's soil and

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Date of Announcement:
May 1998

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets the Menomonee River Valley, a 1,500-acre industrial area in the heart of Milwaukee.

Contacts:

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Visit the EPA Region 5 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/R5Brownfields/>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

groundwater quality due to the area's land use history and the unknown quality of fill used to reclaim it from a marsh. The current nature and extent of groundwater contamination is, however, largely undocumented due to lack of good testing data.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of Milwaukee's brownfields redevelopment program are to remove environmental barriers related to the wetland nature of Menomonee Valley and redevelop one to two properties as test cases, while creating jobs for nearby residents. The Pilot will be used to conduct environmental studies that will form the basis for an "aqua-shed" approach to testing, cleanup, and redevelopment in the valley. The aqua-shed approach requires determination of groundwater flows in the area, and working with the state on optional methods to clean up groundwater on an area-wide, rather than property-specific basis. The city will partner with the state to investigate the aqua-shed concept and encourage voluntary testing of properties in the valley.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Creating a geographic information system (GIS) that tracks available data on subsurface utilities, soil, and groundwater conditions in the valley;
- Conducting Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments at selected sites;
- Installing groundwater monitoring wells and geoprobes to sample groundwater quality;
- Preparing cleanup investigation work plans; and
- Establishing a Citizens and Technical Advisory Committee composed of local citizens, land owners, technical experts, and public officials to review information, provide policy and technical direction, and make recommendations for selection of brownfields sites to be cleaned up.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.